

2010 Nuclear Posture Review Fact Sheet

US Department of Defense

2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) Fact Sheet

April 6, 2010

The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is a legislatively-mandated review that establishes U.S. nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities and force posture for the next five years to ten years.

The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR):

- * Outlines the Administration's strategy for implementing the President's Prague agenda for reducing nuclear dangers and pursuing the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, including concrete steps we can and should take now.

- * Explains how the United States will sustain a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent for us and our allies as long as nuclear weapons exist.

Its findings and recommendations support five key objectives:

#1: Preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism:

For the first time, the NPR places preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism atop the U.S. nuclear agenda.

- * It defines specific steps to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime, and accelerate the securing of nuclear materials worldwide.

- * It renews the U.S. commitment to hold fully accountable any state, terrorist group, or other nonstate actor that supports or enables terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction, whether by facilitating, financing, or providing expertise or safe haven for such efforts.

#2: Reducing the role of nuclear weapons:

Declaratory policy has been updated to bring it into alignment with 21st century needs.

- * The United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and

in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations.

* The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners.

* The United States will continue to strengthen conventional capabilities and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks, with the objective of making deterrence of nuclear attack on the United States or our allies and partners the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons.

#3: Maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced nuclear force levels:

The NPR Report reflects the Administration's commitment to renew arms control and work with Russia to reduce our nuclear forces while maintaining strategic stability. The NPR provided inputs to the instructions to U.S. negotiators and the resulting New START agreement helps to significantly advance this third objective:

* The United States and Russia agreed to limits of 1,550 accountable strategic warheads, 700 deployed strategic delivery vehicles, and 800 deployed and non-deployed strategic launchers. The Treaty does not constrain U.S. missile defenses, and allows the United States to pursue conventional global strike systems.

* The U.S. nuclear Triad of ICBMs, SLBMs, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers will be maintained under New START.

* All U.S. ICBMs will be "de-MIRVed" to a single warhead each to increase stability.

* The United States will pursue post-New START arms control with Russia that addresses not only strategic weapons, but also non-strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons.

* The United States will pursue high-level bilateral dialogues with Russia and China aimed at promoting more stable and transparent strategic relationships.

#4: Strengthening regional deterrence and reassurance of U.S. allies and partners:

The NPR reflects the Administration's commitment to strengthening deterrence against 21st century threats to the United States, our allies, and partners.

* The Administration is pursuing a comprehensive approach to broaden regional security

architectures, including through missile defenses and improved conventional forces.

* As long as regional nuclear threats to our forces, allies, and partners remain, deterrence will require a nuclear component.

* The United States will retain the capability to forward-deploy U.S. nuclear weapons on tactical fighter-bombers and heavy bombers.

* The nuclear-tipped, sea-launched cruise missile (TLAM-N) will be retired as redundant in the overall mix of capabilities.

#5: Sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal:

The United States will sustain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal as long as nuclear weapons exist. The United States will modernize the nuclear weapons infrastructure, sustain the science, technology, and engineering base, invest in human capital, and ensure senior leadership focus. The significantly increased investments called for in the NPR will not only guarantee our stockpile, but facilitate further nuclear reductions, and help enhance our ability to stem nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.

It will also extend the life of warheads currently in the nuclear arsenal. This is an alternative to developing new nuclear weapons, which we reject. Several principles will guide this effort:

* The United States will not conduct nuclear testing, and will seek ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

* The United States will not develop new nuclear warheads. Life Extension Programs (LEPs) will use only nuclear components based on previously tested designs, and will not support new military missions or provide for new military capabilities.

* The Administration will study options for ensuring the safety, security, and reliability of nuclear warheads on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the congressionally mandated Stockpile Management Plan. The full range of LEP approaches will be considered: refurbishment of existing warheads, reuse of nuclear components from different warheads, and replacement of nuclear components.

* In any decision to proceed to engineering development for warhead LEPs, the Administration will give strong preference to options for refurbishment or reuse. Replacement of nuclear components would be undertaken only if critical Stockpile Management Program goals could not otherwise be met, and if specifically authorized by the President and approved by Congress.

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